

**Advanced Communication and Conflict  
CMST 5600**

**Instructor:** Jennifer Peeples

**Office:** Old Main 213

**Office hours:** Monday 12:30-2:30 and  
by appointment

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**Course Description:** This course builds on communication and conflict management skills and concepts learned in previous communication courses with an emphasis on application, community improvement and engagement, and communication consulting.

**By the end of this course you will:**

Learn fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories

- Managing difficult conversations
- Negotiation
- Mediation

Learn how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems.

- Use resources to present credible and useful information for conflict management “clients.”

Learn to apply course materials:

- Inside and outside class, apply conflict concepts and ideas to a variety of situations and audiences.

Develop specific skills, competencies and points of view needed by professionals in conflict management

- Comprehend and practice negotiation and mediation skills for consensus building.
- Adapt and explain conflict skills and ideas to various audiences.
- Experience the process of communication consulting.

**My Expectations:**

I am at my best as a teacher in situations where students are consistently present, engaged with the class content, and actively participating in the learning process (this includes work done outside the classroom). Our satisfaction with the course depends largely on the extent to which you honor these expectations to the best of your ability.

**Your Expectations:**

I believe my responsibilities as a teacher include starting and ending class on time, being prepared to teach, attending office hours, returning your work promptly, grading fairly and fostering a respectful open learning environment. If at any time you feel I have not met these expectations or if you have additional concerns, please relate them to me so that your needs as a student can best be met.

**Required Materials:**

Beer, J., Packard, C. & Steif, E. (2012). *The mediator's handbook*. 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Gabriola Island, B.C., Canada: New Society Publishers

Fisher, R., Ury, W., & Patton, B. (2011). *Getting to yes: Negotiated agreement without giving in*. New York, New York: Penguin Books.

Stone, D., Patton, B., & Heen, S. (2000). *Difficult conversations: How to discuss what matters most*. New York, N.Y: Penguin Books.

Other articles found on Canvas (see schedule)

**Evaluations:**

Mini-tests and short papers:	15%
Knowledge, quality and participation evaluations:	
○ RA workshop	03%
○ RA small group trainings	03%
○ RA fall training proposal	03%
Service learning project:	
Workshop presentation	15%
Workshop materials	15%
Small group training participation	10%
Interview Report	08%
Interview Presentation	03%
Fall training written proposal	15%
Fall training proposal presentation	05%
Reflection paper	05%
Total	<u>100%</u>

**\*\*Please note!** The course has been designated a community engagement class. If you would like credit for having taken a service learning course, you will need to log in to AggieSync (last page of syllabus). You will need to keep track of the hours you dedicate to our project.

**Grade distribution:**

100-93% = A	82-80% = B-	69-67% = D+
92-90% = A-	79-77% = C+	66-63% = D
89-87% = B+	76-73% = C	62-60% = D-
86-83% = B	72-70% = C-	59-0% = F

## Assignments:

Mini-tests and short papers: Assignments given to assess level of knowledge and understanding of course materials.

Knowledge, quality and participation evaluations: As the majority of the course is either conducted as group projects or working with the client, being an active, knowledgeable, and capable group member is of the highest importance. After each of the three main assignments in the class, you will evaluate yourself and those who you have worked with using a number of criteria. The averaged grades will be your participation score for that activity.

Service learning project:

Goals:

- Teach others the importance of good conflict
- Introduce concepts and skills to others in order to help them reduce unwanted conflict as well as have more productive conflict outcomes.
- Learn to adapt materials/information to different audiences.
- Learn the process of communication consulting.

Workshop presentation and materials. As a group, you will prepare a 1.5 hour workshop for perspective resident assistants that will teach RAs how to encourage/train resident to manage their own conflicts. As a group you will decide 1) what should be taught, 2) prepare presentation materials, 3) prepare activities, and 4) present a shortened training to the class. This is a competitive activity in which the training deemed best will be presented to the perspective RAs. All students are required to leave open the presentation date and time—**Tuesday March 13 from 6-7:30.**

Small group training. In pairs, you will do **at least four** one-on-one trainings with the perspective RAs, helping them role play situations they may find themselves in as RAs, how to encourage residents to address their own conflicts in a healthy manner, and examine their conflict management plan for best practices.

Interview Report. In preparation for your fall training proposal, you will interview residents and USU RAs to gain a sense of the types of conflicts and means of resolution currently taking place in USU dorms. This is a short report that summarizes what you found in your interviews and where you think there are implementable places for improvement. Please note: the information in the report should be entirely anonymous.

Fall Training Proposal. The housing and resident life program has asked us to come up with a proposal for a 1-2 hour workshop during the RAs fall training. Based on your research, this class, and the interviews you have conducted, as a group you will draft a proposal and a short pitch as to what concepts should be presented and the materials, activities, etc. you would use. This again will also be a competitive project, with the top proposals being presented to the RA professional staff during finals week.

Reflection paper. The 4-5 page paper will provide the opportunity for you to reflect on what you learned through engaging in service learning project. The paper should be well written and deliberative.

### SCHEDULE

1. *This schedule is subject to change if the demands of the course require it.*
2. The reading assignment will be **discussed** the day it is listed.
3. Graded assignments are written in **bold type**.

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignment	Consulting Project
<b>Week 1</b> Jan 9, 11	Tues: Introduction to course and project  Thurs: Introduce service learning project. Groups for service learning.		
<b>Week 2</b> Jan. 16, 18	Tues: Roommate conflict  Thurs: Roommate conflict	Tues: 1) Moore; 2) McCorkle & Mason; 3) <a href="http://www.niu.edu/Legal/topics/landlord/survival_guide.shtml">http://www.niu.edu/Legal/topics/landlord/survival_guide.shtml</a>  Thurs: DC pp. 1-20; Rahim (read 1-14 then skim the rest).	Investigate the issue
<b>Week 3</b> Jan. 23, 25	Tues: Difficult conversations  Thurs: Difficult conversations	Tues: DC pp. 21-82  Thurs: DC pp. 83-128	Gain information
<b>Week 4</b> Jan. 30, Feb 1	Tues: Difficult conversations  Thurs: Difficult conversations	Tues: DC pp. 129-162  Thurs: DC pp. 163-217	Work on RA presentation
<b>Week 5</b> Feb. 6, 8	Tues: Getting to Yes  Thurs: Getting to Yes	Tues: Yes pp. 1-41  Thurs: Yes pp. 42-81	Work on RA presentation
<b>Week 6</b> Feb. 13, 15	Tues: Getting to Yes  Thurs: RA training	Tues: Yes pp. 82-108  Thurs: RA training work day	Work on RA presentation
<b>Week 7</b> Feb. 20, 22	Thurs: RA training	Tues: <i>Attend Monday classes</i>  Thurs: <b>RA training presentations</b>	Work on RA presentation
<b>Week 8</b> Feb. 27, Mar.1	Tues: RA training  Thurs: RA training	Tues: <b>RA training presentations</b>  Thurs: RA training preparation day	
<b>Week 9</b> Mar. 5-9	<b>Spring Break!</b>		
<b>Week 10</b> Mar. 13, 15	Tues: RA training	Tues: Presentation dress rehearsal  Tues night: <b>6-7:30 p.m. Conflict management presentation to the prospective resident assistants (reserve this time!).</b>	

<b>Week 10</b> Mar. 13, 15	Thurs: Presentation debrief, conducting interviews, & preparation for small group training	Thurs: Conducting interviews reading (TBA); Rahim	
<b>Week 11</b> Mar. 20, 22	Tues: Prepare materials for small group training  Thurs: Small group training practice		Conducting interviews.
<b>Week 12</b> Mar. 27, 29	Tues: Mediation  Thurs: Mediation	Tues: pp. 1-55  Thurs: pp. 55-92	Small group training.& conducting interviews.
<b>Week 13</b> Apr. 3, 5	Tues: Mediation  Thurs: Mediation	Tues: pp. 93-138  Thurs: pp. 141-174  End small group training midnight April 6 <sup>th</sup> .	Small group training & conducting interviews.
<b>Week 14</b> Apr. 10, 12	Tues: Interview debrief  Thurs: Mediation practice	Tues: <b>Interview report and presentation</b>  Thurs:	
<b>Week 15</b> Apr. 17, 19	Tues: Conflict workshop  Thurs: Conflict workshop	Tues: Conflict workshop proposal work day  Thurs: <b>Conflict proposals due &amp; Presentation of conflict proposals</b>	
<b>Week 16</b> Apr. 24, 26	Tues: conflict workshop  Thurs: Class debrief	Tues: <b>Presentation of conflict proposals</b>  Thurs: <b>Reflection paper due</b>	
<b>Final Exam</b> April 30- May 4		<b>Present conflict proposal for fall retreat to RAs</b>	

**Please keep in mind the following:**

**From me:**

- I encourage all students to take advantage of our offices hours or e-mail if you have any questions or concerns over any aspect of the course. We are here to help you learn!
- All presentations must be performed and assignments turned in on the due date in class in order to receive full credit. Exceptions will be made for extreme documented circumstances.

- All assignments must be turned in at the beginning of the class period that they are due or they will receive 05% off the final grade each day the assignment is late including the due date. After three days, the assignment will no longer be accepted.
- Finally, I try to create a comfortable classroom environment that contributes to learning. For that reason, I ask that you turn off phones and keep them off your desks. Please refrain from bringing anything else to class that may distract you or other students.

### **From the university:**

- Disabilities: USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as early in the semester as possible (University Inn # 101, 435-797-2444, [drc@usu.edu](mailto:drc@usu.edu)). All disability related accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.
- USU Plagiarism Policy: Plagiarism includes knowingly "representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials." The penalties for plagiarism are severe. They include warning or reprimand, grade adjustment, probation, suspension, expulsion, withholding of transcripts, denial or revocation of degrees, and referral to psychological counseling. Please refer to The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University, Article VI., <https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/>.
- Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment is defined by the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as any "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature." If you feel you are a victim of sexual harassment, you may talk to or file a complaint with the Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Office, located in Old Main, Room 161, or call the office at 797-1266.
- Withdrawal Policy and "I" Grade Policy: Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term 'extenuating' circumstances includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by an employer, or (5) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.



**GETTING TO AGGIESYNC** AggieSync has replaced Aggies Giving Service (AGS) and students can now log volunteer hours and involvement through the AggieSync portal. Students can log onto AggieSync by visiting My.USU.edu and clicking on the link on the left sidebar under ‘Quick Links’:

- The first time you log in, you’ll be prompted to complete a short profile.
  - Click ‘Utah State University’ on the top left to get back to the homepage, where you can read recent news, check out events and service opportunities, or learn more about our partner organizations on campus and in the Cache Valley community.
  - Sign up for volunteering or RSVP to upcoming events. **LOGGING VOLUNTEER HOURS**
1. Click on your picture and name in the top right corner to access your profile - Select ‘My Profile’.
  2. Once in your profile, you can access your inbox, personal calendar, to-do’s, and log involvement.
  3. To log volunteer hours, click on ‘Involvement’. Once on the page, click on the green ‘Add Involvement Entry’, select if you are logging volunteer hours (service participation), tracking events you attended, or listing your roll or membership in an organization.
  4. For logging volunteer hours, you should click on ‘Service Participation’.
  5. List the service partner who hosted the volunteer event. For example, if you worked at a blood drive, you might select ‘Aggie Health’ as they sponsored the drive. *If you are logging hours for a class, you should log them under the ‘Community Engaged Learning’ Service Partner, and list the course title in the Activity Name. Details on where you volunteered and activities completed can be listed in the reflection section to help you remember the event later.*
  6. List the name of the activity, the date, and total hours you volunteered.
  7. Add the name of the supervisor where you volunteered, and if you have it, their contact information.
  8. You can list anything you learned, or add a short reflection to remind you of what you did that day.
  9. Submit Involvement Entry.

*All hours logged can be found back in the ‘involvement’ page, so you can track engagement over a semester or your entire time at USU.*